

But when it comes to the special interest money trees here in Washington, he says, water them, fertilize them. Give them lots of fertilizer. Give them tender loving care.

He is all green thumbs for special interest campaign money, for, despite his handshake with President Clinton last year and a very pleasant smile in New Hampshire, he did nothing for months on the issue of campaign finance reform so that nothing would occur in this 1996 election. Then when he finally spoke, his view was that the independent organizations who demanded real reform of our election system, they had it all wrong. What America needs is not less campaign spending but more, lots more campaign spending.

Mr. Speaker, when we look at the issue of reforming this Congress, he said, we will have a week next year and we will call it reform week. That was last week and now it has been canceled. America needs a new gardener.

TRAGEDY HIGHLIGHTS AMERICA'S STRENGTH

(Mr. LAZIO of New York asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LAZIO of New York. Mr. Speaker, as I was leaving the memorial service for the families of the victims of TWA flight 800 yesterday, my heart was touched to see crowds of Long Islanders who could not attend the ceremony lining the roads with signs expressing love and support for those who lost loved ones in this terrible disaster.

The signs read: "We Are Praying for You." "Our Hearts Are With You."

If there is any solace in this calamity, it is that Americans from all walks of life have come together to share in this loss, to offer support, and to care for each other.

Coming together in times of need with a true sense of community is one of the great strengths of our Nation. I cannot help but think of the hundreds of people who went out on the dark ocean the night of the disaster to look for survivors and the thousands of people who have literally worked around the clock without much fanfare.

All these people, rescuers, Red Cross workers, FBI agents, NTSB officials, airline employees, local police, Coast Guard members, medical examiners, grief counselors, and citizens from all over the country who volunteer their time and energy have worked selflessly. Even though they have been burdened by very heavy hearts because of the grim work they are doing, they keep at the job.

I urge all Americans, Mr. Speaker, to acknowledge these continuing efforts on Long Island and to express pride in the spirit that makes our country so great.

REPUBLICANS AND MEDICARE

(Mr. BONIOR asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BONIOR. Mr. Speaker, last year NEWT GINGRICH said he wanted Medicare to wither on the vine. At the time, both Mr. GINGRICH and his spokesperson, Tony Blankley, said he was referring to Medicare fee-for-service. But now the Republicans are trying to rewrite history. Thirteen separate times the Gingrich Republicans voted to cut Medicare for tax breaks for the wealthiest individuals and corporations in America. Now they are trying to run away from their record. I suppose next they will tell us that Bob Dole did vote for Medicare back in 1965.

This is one more attempt, I might add, Mr. Speaker, by the Republicans to shut down voices. When seniors tried to speak out against Medicare cuts, they were arrested. Now that the labor movement, which has been the champion of working people, has had the courage to tell the truth about the Gingrich agenda and speak out for working families most affected by these cuts, Republicans are trying to silence them.

Republicans can try to shut down voices all they want to, because they are never going to be able to shut down the truth.

INTRODUCTION OF LEGISLATION TO USE CECIL FIELD AS A SITE FOR A VA NATIONAL CEMETERY AND DEVELOPMENT OF A LONG TERM CARE FACILITY

(Mr. STEARNS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker, the honorable minority whip knows that the Speaker was not talking about Medicare. He was talking about the Health Care Financing Administration. And in the book "Putting People First," by Mr. GORE and President Clinton, they talked about scrapping the Health Care Financing Administration just as the Speaker did. Now they are accusing the Speaker of talking about Medicare when he was not.

Mr. Speaker, in 1993, Cecil Field Naval Air Station was approved for closure by the President and this Congress. The base has long served the military community of Jacksonville, FL, and its surrounding area.

In order to continue to serve our veterans, I am proposing a bill that would designate 1,500 acres of Cecil Field for a veterans cemetery as well as convert the current barracks into a veterans nursing home. Florida's total veterans population is the second largest in the country and it needs these facilities. So I hope my colleagues will help me to sponsor this new bill to help Cecil Field develop a cemetery for veterans.

Mr. Speaker, in 1993, Cecil Field Naval Air Station was approved for closure by the President and this Congress. This base has long served the military community of Jacksonville, FL, and its surrounding areas. In order to continue to serve our military veterans, I am proposing a bill that will designate 1,500 acres of

Cecil Field for a veterans cemetery, as well as convert the current barracks into a veterans nursing home. Florida's total veterans population is the second largest in the country, with over 274,000 veterans within a 100 mile radius of Cecil Field. The barracks are currently in use, housing naval officers and enlisted personnel, and could easily be converted to a nursing home facility for veterans. It is a tragedy that many veterans who fought to secure our freedom, have had to suffer and sometimes die at home because there was not enough room in the current VA facilities. Likewise, the cemetery would require very little money to start up, and would provide those who valiantly fought for this country with a proper burial. Please join me and support this bill to use our current resources for the good of our veterans.

CUTS IN MEDICARE

(Ms. MCCARTHY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. MCCARTHY. Mr. Speaker, Congress must act to ensure that the Medicare Program remains solvent for current beneficiaries as well as future generations. Cuts in the House leadership Medicare proposal would result in reductions to our seniors by decreasing services and increasing costs.

The House leadership proposal includes provisions that would allow doctors to charge seniors more out-of-pocket costs and medical savings accounts which would further exacerbate the program's solvency. We must remain committed to ensuring that seniors have access to high quality, affordable health services. It is time for Congress to get serious about protecting Medicare. We should establish an independent bipartisan commission to analyze these issues and provide recommendations to Congress that would protect the long-term solvency of this program.

Let us solve the Medicare problem by working in a bipartisan method to get the job done, not have it wither on the vine as the Speaker would have it.

THE TRUTH ABOUT MEDICARE

(Mr. KINGSTON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, there is an old saying that when you cannot dazzle people with your brilliance, you baffle them with your bull. Certainly that seems to be the theme of the Democrat Party today, . . . one after the other, saying that the Speaker said Medicare should wither on the vine.

They know, as do their AFL-CIO comrades, that the statement was that HCFA, the Health Care Financing Administration, would wither on the vine. This thing is so important that even television stations have taken this AFL-CIO-Democrat ad off the air because it is a lie.

It is amazing, when they speak with such forked tongue, that they come up here and ask for bipartisanship . . .